Department of Human Services - Equity Action Plan | Executive Summary

The Department of Human Services Equity Action Team has worked collaboratively with the Office of Equity to create the DHS-Equity Action Plan (EAP) that will be implemented during the next two fiscal years, FY22 and FY23.

The goal of the DHS-EAP is to reduce and ultimately eliminate disparities experienced by San Antonio's most marginalized residents.

Vision Statement

DHS works with an acute awareness of systemic racism and is committed to embedding racial equity as a core aspect into its service delivery and programs that will strategically improve conditions for our communities, by bolstering civic and economic power, and closing the gap, so that race and income do not predict one's success.

Commitment

In order to address these disparities, DHS is committed to:

- Deepening our understanding of the role of government in advancing Equity and the City's core values.
- Aligning, integrating, and valuing Equity as an important component to how we do our work and the people we serve.
- Maximizing our resources to introduce strategies that advance Equity.
- Valuing representation and voices from all sectors of our DHS community.
- Improving the quality of life of children, families, and older adults in our community by the application of the Equity framework.
- Building outcome driven work plans that include key milestones and benchmarks for success.
- Recognizing that Equity is everyone's job.

Equity Action Plan Summary

ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT SECTION

Impact Goal #1: The Human Services Department (DHS) Commits To Addressing systemic & institutional racism by aligning equity into its core aspects of programming, service delivery and performance expectations.

Outcome Objective[1]: 100% of DHS staff will be informed about the department's equity vision statement, plan, strategies, and activities through multiple communications strategies.

Strategy #1: Create an Equity Action Committee with representatives from all divisions.

Activities:

(1) Establish a committee structure, policies, and procedures.

(2) Assign a Coordinator to lead the EAC activities at first convening.

(3) Ensure each division is represented on the EAC by at least one staff member.

Smart Goals[2]:

– By October 2021, Nominate and Select members for the Equity Action Committee

– By January 2022, Equity Action Committee to establish a committee charter or policy that defines expectations and assignments

– By September 2023, all divisions will elect a representative (s) to participate on the Equity Action Committee for a 2-year term.

Strategy #2: Create a DHS Equity Vision Statement.

Activities:

(1) Equity Action Committee (EAC) will research sample equity statements from other cities.

(2) EAC will develop an equity statement, vet the statement amongst a cross sector of staff and send to leadership for approval.

(3) Department will update website and guiding documents.

Smart Goals:

– By August 2021 approve the Equity Vision statement in the EAC as an agenda item.

– By September 2023, DHS will post an equity statement and performance metrics on public facing documents and the website.

Strategy #3: Review and update DHS policies and procedures to reflect ongoing commitment to advancing equity.

Activities:

(1) Conduct a review of Department's directives, policies, and procedures.

(2) Update Departmental directives, policies and procedures with equity-oriented language, practices, and methodologies.

(3) Embed equity into the annual planning review of key priorities.

Smart Goals:

– The EAC will review departmental policies and procedures annually.

– By April 2023, DHS will incorporate a diversity and equity framework, language, and practices (methodology) within the department.

Strategy #4: Incorporate a workforce diversity hiring strategy.

Activities:

(1) Utilize HR's forthcoming workforce demographic dashboard for hiring processes.

(2) Utilize HR approved diversity, equity and inclusion interview questions (once adopted) during job interviews for management/professional level positions.

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[1] What is the intended equity impact of this strategy on staff and/or community?

[2] SMART Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Bound

(3) Train hiring managers and supervisors to apply equity practices (methodologies) during hiring processes, including interviews.

Smart Goals:

- Upon the release of HR's pre-approved DEI interview questions, DHS will incorporate and train managers and supervisors on new interview processes within 3-months.
- Upon HR's release of Workforce dashboard, DHS leadership, supervisors and managers will review the HR demographic dashboard within 3-months.

Strategy #5: Develop an Equity Communication Strategy.

Activities:

(1) PR Manager and EAC will develop Department-wide strategy for collecting and disseminating equity -related information, host events and incorporate into DHS Digest.

(2) EAC will develop an initial launch event for equity action plan implementation.

(3) DHS will host department-wide equity meeting on promising equity practices, trainings resources and relevant equity information.

(4) DHS will develop and release an annual report that highlights critical equity related work.

Smart Goals:

- By January 2022, DHS will release an annual department report that highlights the Equity Action and Implementation Plan.
- By April 2022, DHS will host at least one department-wide equity meeting.
- By September 2023, all programs will have at least one entry (equity-related story) in the DHS Digest.
- Conduct a DHS Equity survey to measure changes in staff's understanding of equity and to measure improvements in perceptions towards communication, leadership and engagement.

PROGRAM/ POLICY/ SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT SECTION

Impact Goal #2: Align equity-oriented strategies into all departmental program policies, operations and procedures to strategically improve conditions for our communities and close the gap, so that race and income do not predict one's success.

Outcome Objective: All administrative and operations divisions will develop a 2-Year Equity Action Plan.

Strategy #6: Review division policies, procedures and metrics using an equity framework.

Activities:

(1) Train staff and EAC on equity frameworks process and developing Results Based Accountability (RBA) performance metrics.

(2) Embed EAC member participation in annual and strategic planning activities for divisions and the overall department.

(3) Divisions will develop a team led by their EAC representative to conduct an equity review of division policies and procedures.

Smart Goals:

- By September 2022, provide training for the implementation of the new equity framework process, RBA performance metrics and reporting requirements.
- By September 2023, all program policies and procedures will be reviewed for equity-related opportunities.
- By FY 2023, Division leadership and EAC representative will coordinate the process for conducting an equity review of the division's policies, procedures, and annual working plan.

Strategy #7: Create Division Equity Plans.

Activities:

(1) Coordinate with Office of Equity on the appropriate template and tools for division plans.
(2) EAC representative will work with their respective division administrator to create a plan for developing and implementing an equity action plan.
(3) Train EAC and division staff on equity action process and expectations.
Smart Goals:
- By December 2021, assessments will be conducted of divisions preparedness for equity action plans and findings shared with EAC and departmental leadership.
- By October 2022, create a timeline for the development and implementation of division equity action plans in FY2023.
- By October 2022, create division equity action teams.
- By FY 2023, Divisions will implement equity action plans.

Impact Goal #3: Improve system for collecting, tracking and evaluating disaggregated data by race and income to improve programmatic decision making and budgeting.
Outcome Objective: 100% of programs will collect, track and evaluate disaggregated data by race and income to determine program and budgetary decisions.

Strategy #8: Create a Departmental Directive to standardize disaggregated data collection.
Activities:
(1) Create SOP on data collection, classification, and protection.
(2) Train staff on requirements, expectations and changes on directive and report deadlines.
(3) Conduct departmentwide report utilizing the data to identify needs disaggregated by client demographics (race, income, gender)
(4) Develop RBA equity metrics and strategies for divisions.
Smart Goals:
- By December 2021, finalize and release new department directive on data collection, classification, and protection.
- By March 2022, standardized data collection system for client demographics will be implemented.
- By October 2022, new RBA metric system in place.
- By September 2023, client demographic data will be included in departmentwide report on an annual basis.

PEOPLE: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SECTION

Impact Goal #4: Create a culture of inclusion and success by creating the conditions where residents, community partners, and all staff feel empowered to improve the lives of San Antonio's most vulnerable residents by creating equitable opportunities to thrive.
Outcome Objective: 50% of DHS Boards and Commissions, Evaluation Panels, Strategic Planning Work Groups will be comprised of people most impacted by racial and economic disparities.

Strategy #9: Create an equitable community engagement guide and strategy.
Activities:
(1) Conduct a demographic analysis of DHS's boards and commissions (identify opportunities to reflect community demographics).
(2) Facilitate recruitment and outreach strategies that improve board and commission demographic composition to reflect clients served.
(3) Research community engagement best practices from peer Departments, other municipalities, and community action agencies.

(4) Review COSA community engagement Administrative Directive and connect with Government and Public Affairs on best practices for implementation.

(5) Engage staff with direct knowledge, expertise, and lived experiences to develop an inclusive community engagement approach for the Department.

(6) Leverage DHS's existing board and commissions for feedback on community engagement barriers and best practices.

(7) Formalize equitable community engagement guide.

Smart Goals:
- By Sept 2022, conduct a review of community engagement best practices.
- By FY 2023, an equity community engagement guide will be created for staff and programs.
- By FY 2023, 100% of direct client services programs will incorporate community outreach and engagement best practices that are aligned with the equity community engagement guide.

Impact Goal #5: Commit to building equity capacity and leadership that reflects the community we serve, fosters inclusiveness and shapes community driven solutions that are tied to DHS strategies and outcomes.

Outcome Objective: 100% of managers and supervisors will be assessed for equity-related performance in their annual Employee Performance Evaluation (EPE).

Strategy #10: Introduce Equity as a core responsibility to all managers and supervisors.

Activities:
(1) Coordinate with COSA HR on the citywide updates to the EPE process related to the inclusion of equity performance criteria.

(2) Develop a plan to phase in new criteria in EPEs for management/professional positions.

(3) Include professional development equity training goals to EPEs for full-time, mid-management positions.

(4) Train supervisors on evaluation of EPEs based on newly adopted DEI criteria (HR SET Training).

Smart Goals:
- Develop best practice guide for evaluating equity competencies criteria by September 2022.
- FY 2023 planning EPE's will include advancing equity as a responsibility/goal for all DHS supervisors and managers.
- Evaluation of FY 2023 results and refinement of FY 2024 goals/responsibilities following EPE processes

Strategy #11: Provide Equity training to all DHS staff.

Activities:
(1) Develop training strategy and targeted curriculum to understand impact on underserved communities of color and priority client population for DHS.

(2) Conduct Equity 101 for staff and embed components of Equity 101 into the DHS new employee orientation.

(3) Provide on-going equity learning opportunities with specialized subject matter expertise of DHS program areas and equity.

(4) Utilize the DHS Digest to promote equity learning opportunities for all staff in all job types/areas.

Smart Goals:
- By October 2021, create Equity 101 training strategy.
- By September 2022, 80% of staff attend Equity 101 (part 1) training.
- By September 2023, 40% of staff will participate in specialized advanced equity trainings.

Strategy #12: Incorporate RBA and collaborative program decision making for evaluation and performance metrics

Activities:
(1) Train all supervisors and managers on RBA and equity-based decision making framework.
(2) Create opportunity to share best practices for applying RBA and equity-based decision making, incorporate focus groups with frontline staff to provide feedback on current programs and advancing equity.
(3) Develop a portal to share relevant templates and tools for internal staff.
Smart Goals:
- By December 2021, develop implementation plan to integrate the use of RBA methods into DHS direct client services programs.
- By FY 2023, 70% programs will utilize RBA metrics and apply an equity-based decision making framework.